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ABSTRACT

This paper examines why the author uses fiction in educational writing, examining what sort of education of the emotions he is trying to provide for the readers and how the use of fiction figures in this attempt. The paper focuses on two of his recent journal articles, a writing journal, and various responses to and criticisms of the articles before and after publication. The first article, "Rewriting Student Voice," examines alternative conceptions of student voice, relying on a short vignette from Joyce Carol Oates' "Because it is Bitter, and Because it is My Heart." The second article, "The Teacher as Dostoevskian Novelist," uses Kurt Vonnegut's novel, "Breakfast of Champions" to examine the role of teacher and the teacher's relations with students in progressive approaches to literacy education. The author used fiction in recent writing in four ways (as an example, to provide structure, to mobilize strong emotional responses, and to transgress norms of content and form). He examines three questions raised by the study: (1) How effective was the use of fiction for topics and purposes pursued in his writing?; (2) Did the use of fiction make it harder to get the writing published?; and (3) Is the use of fiction a bad faith attempt to manipulate readers? (Contains 22 references.) (SM)

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Emotions and Literature in Educational Writing

Timothy J. Lensmire

Washington University in St. Louis

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Timothy J. Lensmire
Washington University in St. Louis
Campus Box 1183
St. Louis, MO 63130
email: tjlensmi@artsci.wustl.edu
phone: (314) 935-4810

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Emotions and Literature in Educational Writing
Timothy J. Lensmire

I have a habit (and/or this habit has me): I look to fiction--and it seems I am doing this more and more--for help in my writing on education. For John Dewey (1916/1966), habits are dispositions to act, think, and feel in certain ways and not others. He writes that

> Any habit marks an *inclination*--an active preference and choice for the conditions involved in its exercise. A habit does not wait, Micawber-like, for a stimulus to turn up so that it may get busy; it actively seeks for occasions to pass into full operation. (p. 48)

If, as Dewey argues, *routine* habits "possess us instead of our possessing them" and "put an end to plasticity" and "mark the close of power to vary" (p. 49), I would prefer that my habit of using fiction in my educational writing be more *active* than routine. For Dewey, active habits involve "thought, invention, and initiative in applying capacities to new aims" (p. 53).

Toward this end, I attempt, in what follows, to make some sense of why and how I use fiction in my writing. Or, in terms closer to the theme of this symposium on emotions and educational inquiry: What sort of education of the emotions am I trying to provide for my readers with my writing, and how does the use of fiction figure in this attempt?

I do not mean to sound as if I have no idea of what I am doing when I write. Still, our practices (including our writing) are certainly not transparent to us. My own move to use fiction in my work has been motivated, in part, by a belief that it will help me advocate more effectively certain practices and values. And this "more effectively" is bound up with a sense that fiction might help me move and persuade readers in ways I can't (or don't) without it. Thus, basic questions about my purposes for engaging in educational inquiry and writing, and whether or not my methods are up to these purposes, are raised for me in this exploration. I hope to catch up to at least some aspects of what I am doing in my

writing--techniques or moves I want to name and use in the future, as well as contradictory and unintended elements.

I focus on two of my recent journal articles, and draw on my writing journal[1] and various responses to and criticisms of these articles before and after publication. In the first article (Lensmire, in press), entitled "Rewriting Student Voice," my examination and criticism of alternative conceptions of student voice is pursued with heavy reliance on a short vignette from Joyce Carol Oates's (1990) novel ***Because It Is Bitter, and Because It Is My Heart***.[2] To give you some sense of the prominence of Oates's text in this article--I counted lines, and found that about one-fifth of my manuscript was either direct quotation of Oates's text or quite direct commentary on her text. (And remember, this article is focused not on making sense of Oates's text, but on making sense of conceptions of voice in writing workshop and critical pedagogies.)

In the second article (Lensmire, 1997)--"The Teacher as Dostoevskian Novelist"--Kurt Vonnegut's (1973) novel ***Breakfast of Champions*** helps me examine the role of the teacher and the teacher's relations with students in progressive approaches to literacy education. Vonnegut's text is not as prominent in this article, in some rough quantitative sense, as was Oates's text in my piece on voice--direct quotation and commentary make up about one-tenth of the manuscript.

One final introductory note. Writing that claims self-reflexivity as one of its values is, for me, too often self-indulgent and self-aggrandizing. I value the first, loathe (and fear in my own writing) the later pair. "Every telling," as Madeleine Grumet (1991) notes, "is a partial prevarication" (p. 69)--I risk the later pair, here, in hopes that my tellings will contribute to my own and others' understandings of emotions and literature in educational writing, and support our efforts to write in effective and unconventional ways.

Four Assertions About Fiction In My Writing

1. Oates's novel--especially a vignette about a white teacher named Mrs. Dunphy and a black high school student named Jinx Fairchild--enabled me to write the article on conceptions of student voice.

Oates's novel enabled me to write the voice piece in at least two ways. It enabled me to start writing the piece, and it helped me create a structure for my text.

I had been getting ready to write on conceptions of voice since the spring of 1994. By September of that year, I was telling myself repeatedly in my writing journal that it was time (or past time) that I start writing. I was also reading some of Oates's books--first *Foxfire* (1994), then *Black Water* (1992), and by September 15, *Because It Is Bitter, and Because It Is My Heart*. My entry for September 21, 1994, begins:

> Actually, Sept. 22, early morning, 12:42AM. I should be sleeping, but I think that I may have my lead and/or linking story to the voice paper/chapter. It is a gift from Joyce Carol Oates. Jinx turns in an essay on the topic of "I Believe." Oates's story has everything, or almost: 1) white teacher, black student; 2) correcting grammar on a piece from the heart; 3) the idea that writing can be an expression "of the soul, the voice on paper a silent rendering of his own voice"--but the fact that he's done well in school writing before means that this intimate relation of self and writing is not the only one possible; 4) Jinx writes from the soul, tries to make the writing an expression of himself, but the teacher almost accuses him of cheating because . . .

And it continues for another page and a half.

I am almost always overly optimistic in my writing journal about how much writing I will get done, about my understanding of a topic, about the importance of this or that text to my work. But in this case, Oates's vignette really did allow me to start. By September 28, I note that I have begun drafting and that "I've found, I think, a 'literary voice' for this piece that I like." Perhaps you are someone who moves quickly, painlessly, easily to drafting; I am not. Finding (without looking for) this vignette enabled me to start.

The second way Oates's fiction enabled me to write was that it helped me create a

structure for the piece. And this, in turn, helped ease some of my anxiety in writing what I thought was a very different sort of text than I had before.

In the introduction to my voice piece, I called it "an extended meditation on alternative conceptions of student voice" (p. 1). I liked the sound of "meditation" but it also scared me, since I didn't know if I was capable of pulling off such a thing (in part because I didn't really know what a meditation looked like). My problem here was similar to the problem that Gerald Early (1989) claims confronts writers of essays:

> As Virginia Woolf wrote, "a novel has story, a poem rhyme . . ." but an essay has nothing but its sheer insistence that the writer knows how to write well enough to make you read something that could attempt to be anything and threatens at any moment to be nothing at all. (p. xvii)

Early is suggesting that readers might stick with not-so-well-written novels and poems just to see what happens, to see how a conflict or sound is played out and resolved. And he's claiming that writers of essays can't depend on these built-in resources.

My previous writing had always been grounded in my own teacher research, and I felt comfortable with my ability to produce texts that were recognizable and reasonably successful as reports of this qualitative research. This voice piece was different, not grounded in the same sort of qualitative research methods and forms. The question: Could I write my meditation well enough to make readers keep reading it?

My response: I cheated, I think.

I gave my text, with Oates's help, a sort of narrative structure. Across the first several pages, I quote her vignette, but not all at once. I share a little, then comment, and then share a little more. If readers desire to find out what happens between Mrs. Dunphy and Jinx, then they need to keep reading not only Oates's text, but my comments about it and about how this vignette helps us understand writing workshop conceptions of student voice.

I do not even share, across these early pages, the entire vignette. It is not until halfway through the article that readers see the resolution of Jinx and Mrs. Dunphy's interaction. And then, even as this small story is brought to a close, a new mystery is created with these lines:

> Jinx slips the composition in his notebook. His heart is beating hard and steady, keeping him cool, Iceman style. He's thinking that once there's blood on your hands, blood cries out for blood, doesn't it?

The reader of my text, without having read the novel, will have no idea what this talk of blood is about. I don't help the reader until a couple pages later, until *after* a discussion of the absence of inner dialogue and conflict in workshop and critical pedagogy conceptions of voice (with quotes from and comments on Bakhtin, Giroux, and Joyce's (1976/1916) *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*). And even as I bring my use of Mrs. Dunphy and Jinx's vignette to a close, I keep the character of Jinx and his story alive through the rest of the text, with three more references to him before my conclusion.

My conclusion draws on another vignette from Oates's (1990) novel, about an interaction Jinx has with a black "smartly uniformed man behind the counter" (p. 376) at the local United States Army recruiting station. The vignette concludes Jinx's story in Oates's novel, and has him, in November, 1963, at the age of twenty-four, joining the army. I wrote:

> Jinx was recognized, accepted, not by his teacher, but by his army recruiting officer. And he would lend the powers of his body, not his voice, to his country's project. (p. 21)

Two final points here. First, my use of Oates's novel in this way--to give my text a sort of narrative structure--was not a conscious strategy. My own guess about how this happened at the time is that I was working with her text in ways that I had learned to work with qualitative data--share something, and then talk about what it means. Second, what was more conscious was that I was drawing on not just any old narrative, but a

wonderfully, powerfully written one. I hoped to be guilty (of good writing) by association with Oates.

2. I used the Jinx and Mrs. Dunphy vignette to mobilize (I hoped) anger about and concern for the writing lives of students--especially disenfranchised students--in schools.

In my writing, teaching, everyday life, I consistently resist and talk back to the idea that teachers are to blame for what's wrong with our schools (and I find myself doing this a lot--the Right has been quite successful in vilifying both teachers and public schools). Part of this is wrapped up with who I think I am and where I come from--I am a teacher; my mom, Grandma Lensmire, Uncle Warren, teachers. But I also believe in oppressive societal structures, and that both teachers and students often confront horrible conditions in schools--even as I argue that teachers have been, are, and will have to be a large part of making things better.

However, in this piece on student voice, I was trying to write in solidarity with students, and it's undeniable that we, as teachers, loom large (for better and for worse) in students' lives in schools.

Oates's vignette helped me solve a writing problem: how to name teachers as one of the problems students face when they write, while also distancing myself from criticizing teachers. Oates's vignette shows how Mrs. Dunphy, from her position of authority and across lines of gender, race, and age, disrespects and misunderstands Jinx and his writing. I hoped my readers would be angry with her and that they would root for Jinx in this struggle over meaning and values and grades. Jinx had received a D+ on his paper, and Oates writes that this is "one of the lowest grades Jinx Fairchild has received in English, in years." Jinx made "corrections" requested by Mrs. Dunphy, and raised his grade. I wrote in the article:

> I confess that the first time I read through this vignette about Jinx and Mrs. Dunphy, the last sentence--"And the grade is raised to B+"--almost made me whoop out loud with angry satisfaction. For it seems that Jinx wins in his struggle with Mrs. Dunphy over his paper. Not only does he get the B+, but we also get to see him tell off Mrs. Dunphy, even if only inside his head. Jinx doesn't give in to Mrs. Dunphy and her definition of the situation, and he doesn't let her win by acquiescing to the initial grade she gave him. (p. 12)

As part of a broader examination of the complexities and conflicts that confront students when they write in school--teachers are certainly not the only source of struggle I discuss--I used a fictional story to mobilize anger about what teachers can do to students. But, at the same time, it's not a real teacher. It's only a story.[3]

At least two comments need to be made about my strategy. First, it is parasitic on an assumption we usually make when reading fiction--that we can't assume any straightforward connection between, on one side, an author's experiences and values, and on the other, the experiences and values expressed in her text. Britton (1982) writes that

> Literary discourse . . . IS concerned with the private thoughts and feelings of the writer, but in "bringing them out of hiding" he objectifies them and may explore them through the creation of a personae, so that "we cannot assume that when a literary writer uses the first person he is describing his own experiences or making a confession." (p. 158; quotations are from Widdowson, 1975)

We don't have to assume that Oates knew a Mrs. Dunphy, or had any particular teacher in mind, or that she feels that most teachers are like Mrs. Dunphy. Similarly, my use of Oates's story allowed me to not have to directly criticize teachers, even as I was obviously being critical about how at least some teachers conduct themselves. I accept that this move will strike some as a creative response to a particular rhetorical problem and others, perhaps, as a way to hide from responsibility (and others, as both).

Second, the strategy--and Oates's vignette--depends not on Mrs. Dunphy being a rich, complex character, but on her being a quickly recognizable type, a caricature of the white female high school English teacher. Jinx Fairchild *is* a complex, well-developed character. Indeed, one of the main attractions and resources of Oates's book for me is

Jinx's humanity--and this in a larger context, of course, where the humanity of characters/persons like Jinx--a young black male--is usually denied. I try to make good use of the complexity Oates builds into his character, the inner life and struggles she gives me access to. Jinx's humanity is evident in the vignette and throughout the novel, and I use Oates's accomplishment to mobilize interest in and concern for him and his fate.

Mrs. Dunphy only appears once in the book, in this vignette. Throughout the vignette, we see her and hear her from the outside, from a slightly unstable perspective that shifts between narrator and Jinx's consciousness. She assigns a 500 word composition; fills Jinx's paper with red marks; peers up at him "over her half-moon glasses with a steely little smile of reproach;" and accuses him, it seems, of cheating, when she doubts that the argument of the paper is wholly his own. We are given something like access to Mrs. Dunphy's consciousness for only one brief moment, and this access only seems to confirm our negative evaluation of her:

> She gives a breathy little laugh, uneasy, annoyed: this tall hooded-eyed Negro boy standing there so unnaturally still.

My point is not to criticize Oates's treatment of Mrs. Dunphy. Rather, I want to emphasize that one of the powers of fiction--even as it can open us up to and persuade us of the complexity, dignity, humanity of people and lives and values we don't know (Greene, 1995)--is to simplify and to do violence to complexities of meaning and experience (Davies, 1993; Walkerdine, 1990). My attempt to use this vignette to move readers depended on both opening-up and closing-down aspects of fiction (Booth, 1988).

One of the journal reviewers of my manuscript was critical exactly of how my use of Mrs. Dunphy simplified teaching and learning. While I think I am careful to show in my text how Mrs. Dunphy is both different from and similar to instructors embracing expressivist theory, the reviewer's comments are well-taken (I take them well now, now

that the piece is in press with a different journal):

> Throughout this piece, Lensmire focuses on exchanges between a fictional student and teacher in Joyce Carol Oates novel, and he uses the teacher, Mrs. Dunphy, as representative of instructors who base their pedagogy on expressivist theory. I find this especially disappointing. . . . I suspect Lensmire can characterize advocates of the expressivist approach as somewhat simpleminded because he fails to look at actual expressivist practices. Instead, he offers a stereotype like Oates' Mrs. Dunphy as a stand-in for real expressivist instruction.

3. In his Breakfast of Champions, *Vonnegut provides me with an example of the rather strange idea of a novelist freeing his characters, and I use this example to introduce and develop the central metaphor of my article on teaching and the teacher's role in progressive literacy education: The teacher as Dostoevskian novelist.*

For those partial to Mikhail Bakhtin and familiar with his *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, the idea of a novelist freeing his characters is not so strange. For Bakhtin (1984a), one of the distinguishing aspects of Dostoevsky's work was that he created characters who were not "voiceless slaves," but "*free* people, capable of standing *alongside* their creator, capable of not agreeing with him and even of rebelling against him" (p. 6). Bakhtin called Dostoevsky's work polyphonic because he thought that Dostoevsky decentered the authority of the author's voice in his novels and allowed a plurality of strong voices to sound and be heard. And this in contrast to monologic novelists who, as Wayne Booth (1984) put it in his introduction to Bakhtin's *Problems*,

> Never release their characters from a dominating monologue conducted by the author; in their works, characters seldom escape to become full subjects, telling their own tales. Instead they generally remain objects used by the author to fulfill preordained demands. (p. xxii)

In my article, then, I explored teaching and the teacher's role in progressive literacy education by imagining the teacher as a novelist and students as characters. Traditional teachers were monologic novelists who retained tight control over their student-characters

and didn't let them tell their own tales. Progressive literacy educators were polyphonic novelists who decentered their authority in the classroom-novel, and encouraged and supported a plurality of voices.

One of my main writing problems in pursuing this piece was how to make the idea of a novelist taking up alternative relations with characters accessible. I didn't want to assume that my readers brought a background in Bakhtin's work, and Bakhtin himself took considerably more space than I had to develop the idea. I also didn't want to just assert it, with a version of "Bakhtin says so."

Vonnegut (1973) certainly does not accomplish it the way Dostoevsky did, but a scene from his novel helped me make the idea of a novelist freeing his characters concrete and visible. On a dark street among factories and warehouses, Vonnegut hails and introduces himself to one of his own creations, the character Kilgore Trout:

> "Mr. Trout," I said, "I am a novelist, and I created you for use in my books."
> "Pardon me?" he said.
> "I'm your Creator," I said. "You're in the middle of a book right now--close to the end of it, actually."
> "Um," he said. (p. 291)

Trout, of course, thinks that the man confronting him is crazy, and asks if he has a gun. Vonnegut responds that he doesn't need a gun to control Trout, that all he has to do is write something down, and "that's it." Vonnegut explains to his creation that although he has broken Trout's mind to pieces in the course of this and other novels, Vonnegut loves him, and wants Trout to experience a "wholeness and inner harmony" that Vonnegut has previously denied him.

> I am approaching my fiftieth birthday, Mr. Trout . . . . I am cleansing and renewing myself for the very different sorts of years to come. Under similar spiritual conditions, Count Tolstoi freed his serfs. Thomas Jefferson freed his slaves. I am going to set at liberty all the literary characters who have served me so loyally during my writing career . . . . Arise, Mr. Trout, you are free, you are *free*. (pp. 293, 294)

4. I had a strong desire to retell, in the teacher-as-novelist article, Vonnegut's funny story about what happened to his testicles when he was on his way to free his character, Kilgore Trout.

I realized that my desire to share Vonnegut's story about his testicles was strong after I had written the manuscript and already included the story in a footnote. The first clue to the strength of this desire was my refusal to drop the note after the journal editor told me that the policy of the journal was not to have any. I revised my main text to include material that was in some of the other original fifteen footnotes, and dropped others. In the end, however, the piece was published with three endnotes, the longest of which was the one treating the testicle story.

The second clue that I wanted to retell Vonnegut's story was that, after the piece was published, this endnote was the part of the piece I pointed to first when sharing it with colleagues, friends, and family.

How do we make sense of this desire? I offer three interpretations, the gists of which are suggested by a *New Yorker* cartoon that John, one of the Department of Education secretaries, gave to me several years ago, and that I have had taped to my office door since. In the cartoon, two women are talking at a table in a restaurant, and the caption underneath reads: "I'm having trouble deciding whether he's classically Rabelaisian or just low-end."

First interpretation: My inclusion of the testicle story is classically Rabelaisian, an expression of my playful resistance to the seriousness of academic writing and its erasure of the body. I have studied seriously Bakhtin's (1984b) book on Rabelais and carnival, and have written about how writing workshops might be imagined as carnival-like, alternative sites within schools. One of the main points of Bakhtin's Rabelais book is that carnival practices represented a serious (if laughing) challenge to official knowledge and

values. And I do use the Vonnegut story to raise an important question about the teacher-as-novelist. Without telling the story again, here, let me say that Vonnegut loses (but not forever and in a very funny way) his testicles just as he is about to free Trout. The questions I ask about this in the note are: Is Vonnegut suggesting that the novelist who doesn't have control of his characters is less of a man-novelist? And if we decide he might be suggesting this, then what might this mean for our imaginings of the teacher-as-novelist? Teaching has been and continues to be considered a women's profession; "author" and "novelist" have named in the past and continue to name, for some, the male writer--Is the teacher-as-novelist who doesn't control her students less of a teacher?

Second interpretation: My inclusion and defense of the testicle story marks me and my writing as low-end--vulgar, immature, without manners, without appropriate respect for official practices, without class. Like other low-end people with low-end habits, I enjoy and retell dirty stories I hear; in this case, that I read in Kurt Vonnegut's low-end book, ***Breakfast of Champions***. Vonnegut writes in his book that he is, at age fifty, programmed to "perform childishly--to insult 'The Star-Spangled Banner,' to scrawl pictures of a Nazi flag and an asshole and a lot of other things with a felt-tipped pen. . . . this book is a sidewalk strewn with junk, trash which I throw over my shoulders" (pp. 5, 6). I should note that if low-end carries connotations of belonging to lower social classes--as I think it does--then please call me low-end. In addition to coming from a family with teachers in it, I come from a family and community in rural Wisconsin that is definitely not high-end.

Third interpretation: My use of this story had potential to be subversive in a classically Rabelaisian way, but this potential is not developed adequately. The strongest support for this interpretation is that the story remained in an endnote, that I did not do the work to include it and the interesting and generative questions it inspired into the main text.

So, neither classically Rabelaisian nor low-end, neither hot nor cold, my use of Vonnegut's testicle story was only lukewarm--and the reader, following biblical example (Revelation 3:16), would rather just spit it out.

Some Concluding Questions

I used fiction in my recent writing in at least four ways: as an example, to provide structure, to mobilize strong emotional responses, and to transgress norms of content and form. To conclude, I pose three questions that this exploration raised for me. I respond briefly to each of the questions. In the end, however, it is readers of my work who have answered and will answer them, one way and another.

1. How effective was my use of fiction for the topics and purposes I pursued in my writing?

In relation to my use of Vonnegut, I wonder if the playfulness Vonnegut's text seemed to inspire in my article was actually quite at odds with what was, for the most part, a rather serious and somber reflection on the complexities and responsibilities of being a teacher. Teaching certainly does (or should) involve play and laughter and transgression. But if anything, in this piece I am arguing for a vision of teaching that is harder and perhaps less joyful (or at least the joy is harder won) than workshop advocates and other progressives put forward. The fun I have with Vonnegut seems inconsistent with the explicit content.

My use of Oates's vignette seems better aligned with my topic and purposes in the voice piece. However, an interesting problem arises with even the powerful appropriation of a moving story with complex characters such as Jinx: The reader may care more about the story and characters than the topic you are pursuing. Another reviewer of this piece

(not the same one as quoted above) noted that a problem with using this vignette is exactly

> that the story of Jinx and Mrs. Dunphy is so compelling. After finishing the article, a reader is at least as interested in obtaining and reading a copy of the novel as he or she is in exploring better visions of student voice. The author's original contribution of voice as project fades before the question, "What happened to Jinx?" This is a rhetorical problem that works against the author and his or her point.

Stated a little differently--we are attracted to fiction exactly because of the power it might bring to our texts, but the fiction we use may actually overpower us and our texts.

2. *Did my use of fiction make it harder to get these pieces published?*

This is a bad question, in at least two ways. First, it is impossible to answer, since an answer would somehow require trying to get these pieces published with and without the use of fiction, and these pieces, of course, don't exist without fiction. Second, if I am tempted to answer yes--which I am--then I seem to want some sympathy for my trouble, and I have no real right to complain. Both articles have found good homes in good journals, and they represent a little less than half of my next book, which has a publisher.

That said, I invested almost an entire fellowship year in the writing of the voice manuscript, and, despite having produced what several trusted readers and I thought was the best piece of writing that I had done so far, it took a long time for me to get it accepted anywhere. I declined to revise and resubmit to two journals before the third accepted it pretty much as is. Reviewers and editors for both of the first two journals questioned my use of the Oates vignette, and one editor went so far as to suggest a total dismantling of the structure with which I was so pleased--I was instructed to put "narrative first, theory second, followed by implications for instruction."

The teacher-as-Dostoevskian-novelist manuscript was only rejected by one journal before being accepted by the second, but it has caused some public trouble. The accepting

journal's editors, Peter Smagorinsky and Michael Smith, supported the publication of the piece, but were clearly nervous about it in their introduction to the issue in which it appeared, and asked me to write what amounted to a brief defense of the piece as research, which they included in their introduction.[4] The former editor of this journal, Sandra Stotsky, posted a message to the journal's electronic readers' forum immediately after publication. In this message, she requested/demanded that the current editors defend my piece as research, that the names of the three anonymous reviewers of my piece be made public, and that these reviewers be required to submit essays about how my work was research. Stotsky wrote:

> If they [the anonymous reviewers] don't have the courage or the ability to spell out clearly for the rest of the field what they think constitutes research and how Lensmire's article fits or doesn't fit, then their opinions should not have been drawn upon. At this point, they should also be identified. This is too important a matter for people to hide behind a 'mask.'[5]

At first glance, the commotion seems to be about the publication of what was considered a theoretical piece in a journal that had traditionally published empirical work (and more traditional--not qualitative--empirical work at that). Still, the theory I drew on--mostly Bakhtin's work on Dostoevsky--and important examples I used to work and rework this theory in my piece were literary, were grounded, in the end and in large measure, in fiction.

3. Is my use of fiction a bad faith attempt to manipulate readers?

My answer is no, and that answer is easy because I loaded the question with "bad faith" and "manipulate." But more importantly, I assume that all texts are rhetorical, using varying means to persuade readers. In what Stanley Fish (1995) calls a basic "disagreement about the basic constituents of human activity and about the nature of human nature itself"--that is, in the "quarrel between rhetorical and foundational thought" that "is

itself foundational" (p. 208)--I assume the side of rhetoric. If you tell me that my attempt to use fiction to stir up the insides of my readers and to move them to take on (or at least try on) certain habits of feeling and thinking and acting is bad faith manipulation, I respond that I can't see how any sort of writing really escapes this problem.

But this exploration of my fiction-habit has forced me to start thinking more seriously about what seems a serious conflict or tension in the meanings and values I pursue in my writing and teaching. Both are full of explicit and implicit valuings of dialogue and the possibilities of democratic deliberation. While I work hard not to romanticize what happens when we actually talk and work together in the name of democratic education and participation, values such as cooperation, trust, listening, and learning from others are emphasized.

At the same time, I also assume that my writing and teaching are part of a struggle over meanings and values, where this struggle isn't only the struggle of dialogue. I assume a struggle that is *not* characterized by cooperation or trust or much effort to learn from others. And in this struggle, I want to win. I want to win, in the sense of contributing to certain moral and ideological positions--associated with a critical and creative democratic project--being embraced and others rejected.

Without assuming a hard distinction between means and ends, we should remember that the evaluation of the appropriateness of certain means of persuasion is wrapped up with an evaluation of the desirability of the end or ends pursued with those means. As Booth (1988) put it: "Appropriate to *what*?--that is always the question" (p. 315). If, at the end of this examination, I am relatively pleased with and committed to the continued experimentation with and use of fiction in my work, I am troubled by the conflicting ends these means seem to be appropriate for.

Notes

[1] I have never had any luck trying to keep a regular journal, but when I began working on my dissertation, I started keeping a writing journal that I wrote in most days before my work--I continue the practice. My writing journal was first inspired by Steinbeck's (1990) *Journal of a Novel: The East of Eden Letters*.

[2] All quotations from Oates's novel, unless noted, come from this vignette (pp. 173-176).

[3] I criticized my third grade writers for making exactly this sort of claim--as a way of distancing themselves from responsibility for their stories--in *When Children Write* (1990).

[4] My first response was that whether or not this was research was quite unimportant to me, and that I didn't want to spend any time on the question. The question is still not very important to me.

[5] None of these demands have been or will be met, as far as I know. I wrote a response to Stotsky's posting that said, among other things, that it was unfair to name reviewers who had agreed to be anonymous reviewers and "quite unfair to suggest that the reviewers are either stupid or afraid if they don't write 'essays' about how my work is research. I'm sure that they have more important things to do with their time."

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